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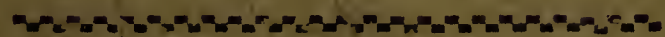


ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1945.



CROOK
LINTONS, (WM. WALTON) PRINTERS, CHURCH STREET.

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³ Weardale Rural District Council.

Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1945.

GENTLEMEN,

Herewith I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1945.

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions.

Area of District, 99,652 acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of population, 8,830.

Number of inhabited houses at end of year, 3,129.

Rateable value, £46,381.

Sum represented by a penny rate £183:4:5.

Employment continued good during the year owing to the steady demand for steel for war purposes, at Wolsingham Steelworks, and at the limestone quarries higher up Weardale. Ashes Quarry and Newlandside Quarry, near Stanhope, were closed down, but the men thus thrown out of work were soon absorbed into other employment, some of them at a new quarry at Harrow Bank, Eastgate. Gannister and iron ore have been despatched in large quantities from upper Weardale. A considerable quantity of lime for agricultural purposes is now being produced at Stanhope Burn and Broadwood. The year showed no sign of any revival in the lead mining industry at Rookhope. A large number of women continued to be employed on munitions work at Wolsingham, and at Crook, outside the area. Wages have maintained their high level and there has been no destitution. In regard to agriculture, the foremost industry of the dale, the war-time increase of tillage with consequent diminution of meadow and pasture, which I have previously referred to, has continued.

The Registrar-General's estimate of population for the year is 8,830.

VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.

There were 105 births (alive and still).

Live Births	...	101
Still Births	...	4
		<hr/>
		105

LIVE BIRTHS.

	Male	Female
Legitimate	...	44
Illegitimate	...	5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	46	55

STILL BIRTHS.

Legitimate	...	0
Illegitimate	...	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	0	4

On an estimated population of 8,830 these figures give a total birth-rate of 12 per 1,000 population. Excluding still births, the live birth-rate was 11.4 per 1,000 population. The live birth-rate for the whole of England and Wales was 16.1 per 1,000 population.

The still birth-rate was 4.7 per 1,000 population, compared with a still birth-rate for the whole of England and Wales of 4.6 per 1,000 population.

DEATHS.

89 deaths pertaining to the district were registered:

Male	44
Female	45
	<hr/>
	89

These figures give a death-rate of 10.8 per 1,000 population. The death-rate for the whole of England and Wales was 11.4 per 1,000 population.

Of the 89 deaths, 24 were persons between the age of 70 and 80, 14 between 80 and 90, and 3 over 90.

MATERNAL DEATHS.

I am pleased to be able to report that for the eighth year in succession there was not a single death from puerperal sepsis or other puerperal cause. I think the district has every reason to be congratulated on the efficiency of its midwifery services.

INFANTILE DEATHS.

These numbered 2 and were as follows:—

	Male	Female
Legitimate	0	2
Illegitimate	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	0	2

This gives an infantile death-rate of 19 per 1,000 births, which is an exceptionally low rate, and which compares favourably with an infantile death-rate of 46 per 1,000 births for the whole of England and Wales. In upper Weardale, 44 years ago, the infantile death-rate reached the appalling figure of 208 per 1,000 births. It is obvious that the infants being born today have an infinitely better chance of surviving to maturity than their predecessors of earlier days had. This happy state of affairs is mainly due to the more enlightened and rational ideas that now prevail in regard to the care of infants, and to the good work being done by the maternity and infant welfare clinics.

DEATHS FROM CANCER.

These numbered 16, which represents 18 per cent of all the deaths, giving a cancer death-rate of 1.8 per 1,000 population.

DEATHS FROM MEALES 0

DEATHS FROM WHOOPING-COUGH 0

DEATHS FROM DIARRHOEA (under 2) 0

In spite of the war-time restrictions which prevailed during the year, I do not think that the health of the community was prejudicially affected to any serious degree.

CAUSES OF DEATH				Males.	Females.
All Causes				44	45
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid fever	...	...	0	0
2	Cerebro-spinal fever	...	...	0	0
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	0	0
4	Whooping Cough	...	...	0	0
5	Diphtheria	...	...	0	0
6	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	3	1
7	Other Tuberculosis	..	...	0	0
8	Syphilitic diseases	...	...	0	0
9	Influenza	..	...	0	0
10	Measles	...	...	0	0
11	Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis	..	...	0	0
12	Infantile Encephalitis	...	...	0	0
13	{ Cancer of buccal cavity & oesophagus (M) Cancer of uterus (F)	...	...	2	0
		...	...	0	0
14	Cancer of stomach & duodenum	...	...	0	1
15	Cancer of breast	...	...	0	0
16	Cancer of other sites	...	...	5	8
17	Diabetes	...	...	0	3
18	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	...	...	4	7
19	Heart disease	...	...	13	11
20	Other circulatory diseases	...	...	1	0
21	Bronchitis	...	...	1	3
22	Pneumonia	...	...	1	1
23	Other respiratory diseases	...	...	1	0
24	Ulcer of stomach & duodenum	..	...	0	0
25	Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	...	...	0	0
26	Appendicitis	...	...	0	0
27	Other digestive diseases	..	...	1	0
28	Nephritis	...	...	3	3
29	Puerperal & post-abortion sepsis	...	...		0
30	Other maternal causes	..	...		0
31	Premature birth	..	...	0	0
32	Congen. malformation, birth injury and infantile diseases	...	...	0	1
		...	...	0	0
33	Suicide	...	...	0	0
34	Road traffic accidents	...	...	2	0
35	Other violent causes	...	...	0	1
36	All other causes	...	...	7	5
Total				44	45

Appended are the birth-rates and death-rates for the preceding seven years:—

	Birthrate	Deathrate
1938	15.6	14.1
1939	14.0	13.9
1940	13.3	16.6
1941	14.2	12.9
1942	12.7	11.2
1943	13.6	13.9
1944	16.7	14.2
1945	11.4	10.8

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

MEDICAL.

Medical Officer of Health (part-time)

JAS. BANNERMAN, M.B.

Tuberculosis Medical Officer

Venereal Diseases Medical Officer

School Medical Officer

Maternity and Child Welfare Medical Officer

Obstetric Consultants

} Under
Durham County
Council.

OTHERS.

Sanitary Inspectors,

Jas. R. Ridley, Cert. R.S.I., Lond., to 30th June,
(whole time).

R. G. Suddick, Cert. R.S.I., Lond., from 1st May,
(whole time).

Veterinary Surgeon

Public Analyst

Health Visitor

} Under Durham County Council.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Bacteriological examinations of sputum, throat swabs and blood for the diagnosis of tuberculosis, diphtheria and typhoid fever, respectively, are carried out at the Public Health

Laboratory, King's College, Newcastle, as well as other investigations when considered necessary, e.g. examination of urine and faeces, and also virulence tests. This valuable work is done at the expense of the County Council. During the present year, largely in consequence of outbreaks of disease at the Castle School and the Emergency Hospital it was necessary to make extensive use of these facilities, and the investigations done for our area numbered 520. Every practitioner can make use of these facilities and a copy of every report is sent to the M.O.H.

The bacteriological examinations for the Isolation Hospital are done by the Clinical Research Association, London, and during the year 55 such investigations were carried out.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

Most households in the area subscribe 5/- per annum to the Weardale Ambulance Association, whose motor ambulance is stationed at St. John's Chapel. This payment entitles the household to four free journeys to or from hospital in the year, for bona-fide stretcher cases only, i.e. cases which cannot make the journey by train, bus or car.

The quarry workers have, through their union, a separate arrangement for the service of a motor ambulance from Tow Law, for stretcher cases, and payment of train, car or bus fare for less serious cases, for the workers and their families.

The vehicles of the Weardale Ambulance Association and the Weardale Isolation Hospital were earmarked for duty with the local casualty services, in the event of any hostile emergency. The County Council had a motor ambulance stationed at Wolsingham for the same purpose.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The whole of the area, with the exception of the sparsely inhabited neighbourhood of Hunstanworth, is provided with district nurse-midwives, working under local associations. These are all, with the exception of Stanhope, whose nurse is not maternity trained, affiliated to and subsidized by, the the County Nursing Association. Maternity cases at Stanhope are attended by a County Council midwife stationed there.

TREATMENT CENTRES.

Maternity and Child Welfare Centres are in operation at Wolsingham, Stanhope and St. John's Chapel. A Venereal Diseases Clinic at Durham and a Tuberculosis Clinic at Bishop Auckland are available for the District. These are all under County Council control.

HOSPITALS.

There is no general hospital in the area. By far the greater part of the cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, which receives a fair amount of financial support from the District. A centrally situated small cottage hospital would be a priceless boon to Weardale, where so many of the dwelling houses are small and utterly unfit for adequate nursing of serious medical and surgical cases.

The former Poor Law Institution at Stanhope, is now an Emergency Hospital, for chronic female cases only, under the County Public Assistance, and some local cases have had the benefit of this hospital.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Three samples were taken for analysis and found to be satisfactory.

The existing supplies were generally satisfactory and sufficient throughout the year.

At Whitekirkley village 160 yards of the water main was relaid with 2 inch asbestos pipes. The 2 inch main at Shallowford, Westgate, was extended.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

No new work was undertaken during the year. Some 30 minor defects were attended to.

SCAVENGING.

A scavenging scheme is now in operation for every village in the district. In the villages of upper Weardale only dry refuse (ashes etc.) is removed, and nightsoil (privy contents) is not removed. In my opinion this arrangement is most unsatisfactory and unfair to the ratepayers and I would urge the Council to undertake the removal of nightsoil.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

During the year 18 privies and ash-closets were converted to water-closets. There are now 1238 water-closets, and 1244 privies and ash-closets in the area.

GENERAL SANITARY WORK.

The following is a summary of the work done by the sanitary department during the year:—

	Informal written notice by Inspector.	Nuisance abated after notice.
Dwelling house - structural defects	15	15
Dairy defects	3	3
Cowshed defects	11	11
Privy and Ashpit defects	4	4
Water-closet defects	2	2
House drainage defects	30	30
Water supply defects	3	3

RAT & MOUSE DESTRUCTION - Infestation order, 1943.

Survey and baiting of the sewers in the area was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Food, as a preliminary to the campaign proper.

RURAL WATER SUPPLIES AND SEWERAGE ACT 1944.

A survey of the water supplies and sewerage systems in the area was carried out in conjunction with Messrs. Balfour, who have been appointed Consulting Engineers, with a view to improvements under this Act.

SECTION D.

Housing

In January, along with Mr. Ridley, I made a re-inspection of the Dowson property at Crawleyside at your request and reported to you on the defects which had not been remedied after previous notice.

On account of the war-time shortage of both labour and materials, no new houses were erected during the year.

Except for the commencement of four Swedish Timber Houses at Wolsingham, no new houses were erected during the year. Sites were selected and layout plans were being prepared with a view to the following building programme being put into early execution, the proposed houses in all cases being permanent brick houses:—

Wolsingham	30
Frosterley	10
Stanhope	20
Crawleyside (if site available)	4
Rookhope	4
Westgate	4
St. John's Chapel	4
Wearhead	4
	<hr/> 80 <hr/>

In some of the above schemes the draft layout plans provided for additional houses to be built later if required.

By the end of the year the consent of the Ministry of Health had been obtained to the seeking of tenders for 21 of the above houses at Wolsingham, Frosterley and Stanhope.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

It was found that the milk being supplied to the Stanhope Emergency Hospital was not of the requisite purity, and showed evidence of dung contamination on bacteriological examination. This milk supply came from more than one farm. I visited the farms concerned, and endeavoured to get cleaner methods employed. Two further samples examined were both unsatisfactory, but subsequent samples gave a quite satisfactory report. I do not for a moment suppose that this particular milk was any worse than what is being supplied to many households in the district. It seems well nigh impossible to get our milk producers to realize that milking and the handling of milk should be done with the same care for scrupulous cleanliness as a surgeon has to use for a surgical operation.

I paid visits of inspection to the milk bottling depot and the bakehouse of the local co-operative society, and was pleased to find no cause for serious complaint.

Under the Ministry of Food regulations, 9 lots of unwholesome food were seized and destroyed.

SECTION F.**Prevalance of, and Control over, Infectious Disease.**

I received 298 notifications, which were as follows:—

Disease	Total Cases	Admitted to hospital	Deaths
Smallpox ...	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever .	20	18	0
Pneumonia ...	10	0	2
Measles ...	197	0	0
Diphtheria ...	38	15	0
Erysipelas ...	3	0	0
Whooping Cough ...	12	0	0
Typoid Fever ...	7	4	2
Dysentery ...	11	0	0
Totals	298	37	4

A wide-spread epidemic of measles occurred in the spring months. Measles seems to break out periodically in every district, whenever a new and susceptible generation has grown up to the susceptible age. Our previous epidemic before this was in 1942. Measles is a disease that has altered greatly in severity in the last 40 or 50 years. I can remember when the usual mortality rate of measles was between 6 & 8 per cent. We had not a single death out of the 197 notified cases in this recent epidemic. If this epidemic had happened 50 years ago, probably at least 15 children would have died. Our child population appears to be gradually acquiring a considerable degree of immunity to this once serious disease, and this change is not associated with any particular advances in treatment compared to 50 years ago.

The occurrence of a large crowd of diphtheria carriers (all confirmed by bacteriological examination) at Stanhope Castle Approved School, caused for a time considerable anxiety. None of these cases were really ill at all but they were all harbouring diphtheria bacilli in their throats. Some 32 of the boys and 2

of the female teaching staff were involved. I ordered the first dozen of the cases to be removed to the Isolation Hospital, but as there was not accommodation there for any more, the remainder were isolated at the School. Quarantine regulations were strictly enforced, and the boys' summer sports were cancelled. In view of the somewhat alarming nature of this outbreak, I subsequently arranged to have a series of experimental virulence tests carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, King's College, Newcastle, and this investigation proved every case to be definitely non-virulent, thus ending our anxiety. It is interesting to note that every boy in this school is immunized against diphtheria immediately after admission, and in all probability this was a potent factor in the complete absence of any serious symptom in the boys affected.

An outbreak of para-typhoid fever occurred at the Stanhope Emergency Hospital in the early part of the year. Three cases were elderly inmates, two of whom died and one recovered. These 2 deaths were transferable to other areas. Four, at least, of the staff were found to be carriers. Elaborate examinations of the blood, urine, and faeces of all the inmates and staff were carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, but the experts were unable to elucidate the precise origin of the outbreak. Repeated examinations of the milk and water supplied to the Institution also revealed nothing of a causative nature. Probably the trouble was started by infected food brought into the Institution by some inmate's friend.

During March an outbreak of dysentery, confirmed by bacteriological examination, occurred in Stanhope. In view of the recent cases of para-typhoid fever, this was rather disquieting at first. Fortunately the infection was of a benign type and all the cases made a good recovery.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNIZATION.

During the year, 91 children were privately immunized by the doctors practising in the area. The immunizing material is supplied gratis to the doctors by the M.O.H. No mass immunizations were done at the schools in the area. I do not consider the present scheme to be as satisfactory and efficient as were the former periodical mass immunizations done by the M.O.H. at the various schools. Since the work was handed over to the private practitioners, fewer children have been immunized each year.

Disinfection of dwelling houses after illness was carried out in 19 instances.

TUBERCULOSIS

Age Periods.			New Cases.				Deaths.			
			Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	...						
1	...	...						
5	"	...	1		1					
15	...	...	1	5			1	1		
25	...	...	2		1		1			
35	...	...	2							
45	...	...						
55	...	...	3				1			
65 and upward	...	...						
Totals ...			9	5	2	0	3	1	0	0

I received 16 notifications of fresh cases, 14 pulmonary and 2 non-pulmonary. There were 4 deaths, all pulmonary. The tuberculosis death-rate for the year was .4 per 1,000 population.

CIVIL DEFENCE.

During the year the war-time civil defence arrangements were terminated after the cessation of hostilities. Along with Mr. Ayton and Mr. Ridley, I attended, on your behalf, a public function at Durham to commemorate the winding up of the civil defence scheme. Sir John Hodsall, the Inspector-General of Civil Defence, was present, and on behalf of the government and the country generally, warmly thanked all who had helped in this very necessary work. The war never reached our district fortunately, but it should be put on record that we had efficient and well trained teams of men and women ready for any emergency, who would, I am sure, have given a good account of themselves had the necessity arisen.

In concluding this Annual Report, Gentlemen, I now have to take official leave of you as your servant, after 44 years service. I am grateful to you for the kindly consideration you have always extended to me, and I sincerely hope that the pleasant relations that have always existed between you and me, will, in the future exist between you and my successor.

I am,

Yours obediently,

JAS. BANNERMAN.

